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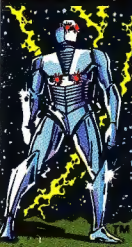
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DETAILS INSIDE

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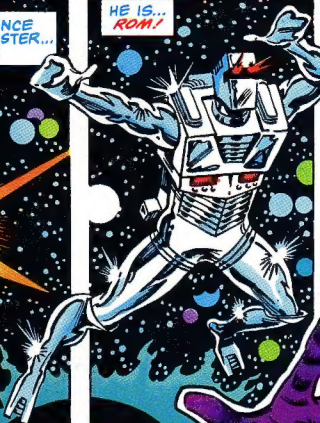
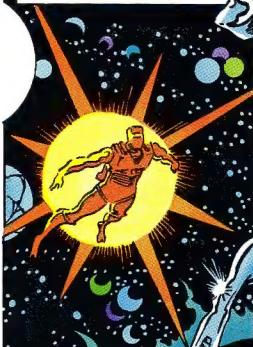
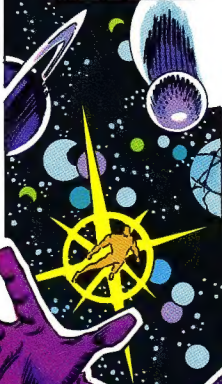


ROM™

HE COMES-- A
SILVER RIDER OF
THE SPACEWAYS...

HE SEEKS SUSTENANCE
FOR HIS MIGHTY MASTER...
GALACTUS.

HE IS...
ROM!



Two-hundred years ago, the evil Dire Wraiths threatened the peace-loving planet, Galador. In their homeworld's darkest hour, a thousand brave, young Galadorians sacrificed humanity itself to become Cyborg Warriors, a last desperate line of defense. Though hopelessly outnumbered, these Spaceknights triumphed, and pursued the remnants of the Wraith horde across the universe. Now, alone in the Enemy's mightiest stronghold, on a backward planet called Earth, one Galadorian Warrior faces his most awesome challenge.

STAN LEE PRESENTS: THE GREATEST OF THE SPACEKNIGHTS--ROM!

BILL MANTLO / SAL BUSCEMA / JOE SINNOTT / NOVAK, LETTERS / AL MILGROM / JIM SHOOTER
WRITER ARTIST INKER DON W., COLORS EDITOR CHIEF

TURNABOUT IS FAIR PLAY!



GALADORIANS, REJOICE! THE DANGER IS PAST! I HAVE STRUCK A PACT WITH GALACTUS! HE WILL NOT CONSUME OUR WORLD!

REJOICE, ROM? HOW? GALACTUS'S HERALD--TERRAX THE TAMER--HAS MADE A RUIN OF GOLDEN GALADOR!

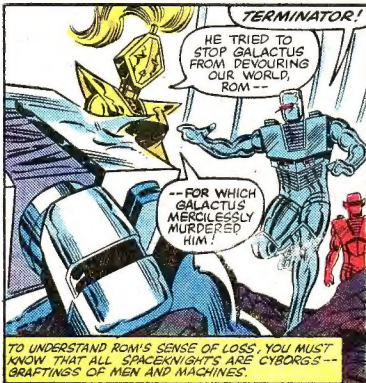
AND GALACTUS HIMSELF HAS TAKEN THE LIVES OF OUR BELOVED PRIME DIRECTOR--

--AND OF OUR STAR-CROSSED FELLOW SPACEKNIGHT, TERMINATOR!

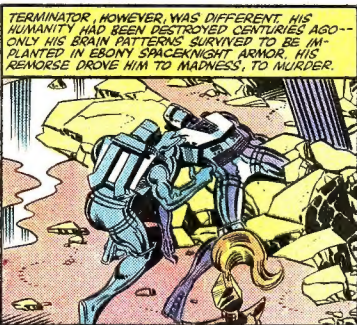
ROM HAD EXPECTED SOME RUINATION OF GALADOR. HERE HE COULD STRIKE HIS BARGAIN WITH GALACTUS, BUT DEATH HE HAD HOPED TO AVOID...

...ESPECIALLY THIS DEATH!

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TO UNDERSTAND ROM'S SENSE OF LOSS, YOU MUST KNOW THAT ALL SPACEKNIGHTS ARE CYBORGS -- GRAFTINGS OF MEN AND MACHINES.



WHEN THE EVIL MENTUS OFFERED TERMINATOR THAT HALF OF ROM'S HUMANITY STORED AWAY ON GALADOR, TERMINATOR ACCEPTED... AND MENTUS CREATED A SECOND ROM, EVERY BIT AS POWERFUL AS THE FIRST.





YOU WOULD HAVE ME USE THE **POWER COSMIC** INVESTED IN MY **BATTLE AXE** TO RAISE A SEPULCHRE FOR A FALLEN FOE?

SO BE IT! AS GALACTUS COMMANDS TERRAX--



--SO, TOO, DOES TERRAX COMMAND THIS GALADORIAN CLAY TO THRUST FORTH A STONY BIER ON WHICH TO LAY TO REST A SPACEKNIGHT!

SHRAK!



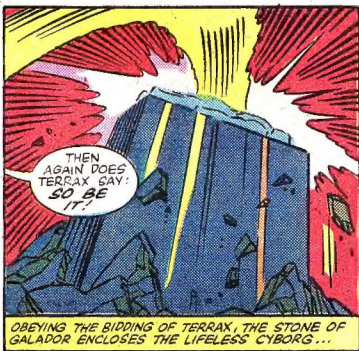
COLD STONE FOR A COLD CYBORG, TERMINATOR! SLEEP WELL, FAITHFUL FRIEND!

YOU CARRY WITH YOU, TO ETERNITY, **HALF** THE HUMANITY OF **ROM!**



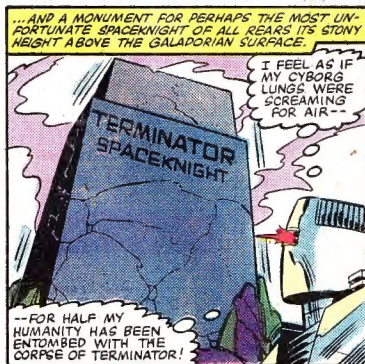
IS THAT YOUR EULOGY FOR A FRIEND, SPACE-KNIGHT? ARE THOSE THE WORDS WITH WHICH YOU WOULD SPEED HIM ON HIS WAY?

TERMINATOR IS ALREADY GONE TO GREET WHATEVER GODS THERE BE, TERRAX. PROCEED WITH HIS ENTOMBMENT.



THEN AGAIN DOES TERRAX SAY: **SO BE IT!**

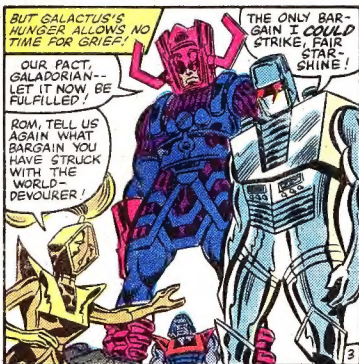
OBEYING THE BIDDING OF TERRAX, THE STONE OF GALADOR ENCLOSES THE LIFELESS CYBORG...



...AND A MONUMENT FOR PERHAPS THE MOST UNFORTUNATE SPACEKNIGHT OF ALL REARS ITS STONY HEIGHT ABOVE THE GALADORIAN SURFACE.

I FEEL AS IF MY CYBORG LUNGS WERE SCREAMING FOR AIR--

--FOR HALF MY HUMANITY HAS BEEN ENTOMBED WITH THE CORPSE OF TERMINATOR!



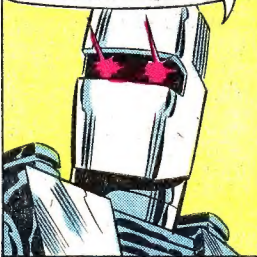
BUT GALACTUS'S HUNGER ALLOWS NO TIME FOR GRIEF!

THE ONLY BARGAIN I COULD STRIKE, FAIR STAR-SHINE!

OUR PACT, GALADORIAN-- LET IT NOW BE FULFILLED!

ROM, TELL US AGAIN WHAT BARGAIN YOU HAVE STRUCK WITH THE WORLD-DEVOURER!

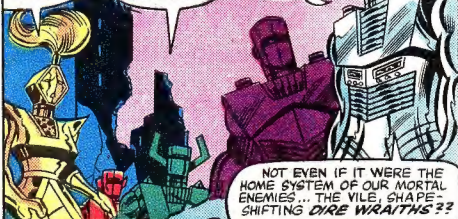
IN EXCHANGE FOR GALACTUS'S PLEDGE NOT TO CONSUME THE LIFE-ENERGIES OF GOLDEN GALADOR, I HAVE VOWED TO BE HIS HERALD--TO LEAD THE RAVAGER OF WORLDS ACROSS TRACKLESS SPACE TO AN ENTIRE **STAR SYSTEM** WHICH HE **MAY DEVOUR**.



IS THIS HOW GALADOR PURCHASES HER EXISTENCE --BY TOSSING GALACTUS THE BONES OF OTHER WORLDS?

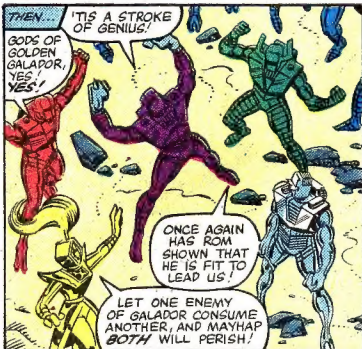
ALL LIFE IS SACRED TO US, ROM! YOU CAN NOT DOOM ANOTHER STAR SYSTEM--NOT EVEN TO SAVE OUR OWN!

NOT EVEN IF THAT OTHER STAR SYSTEM WERE THE DREADED **DARK NEBULA**, SPACE-KNIGHTS?



NOT EVEN IF IT WERE THE HOME SYSTEM OF OUR MORTAL ENEMIES... THE VILE, SHAPE-SHIFTING **DIRE WRAITHS??**

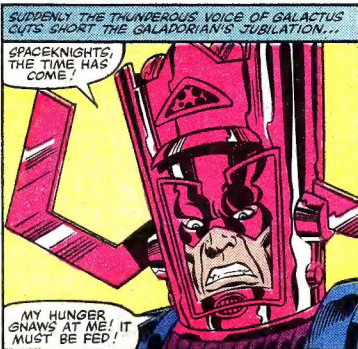
THERE IS A MOMENT OF SHOCKED SILENCE AMONG THE ASSEMBLED SPACEKNIGHTS AS ROM'S REVELATION SINKS IN.



THEN... 'TIS A STROKE OF GENIUS! GODS OF GOLDEN GALADOR, YES! YES!

ONCE AGAIN HAS ROM SHOWN THAT HE IS FIT TO LEAD US!

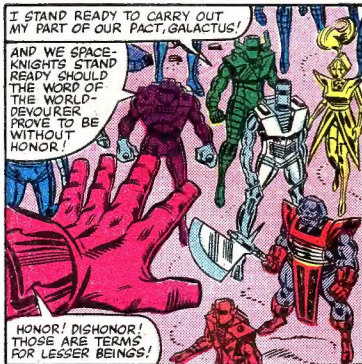
LET ONE ENEMY OF GALADOR CONSUME ANOTHER, AND MAYHAP **BOTH** WILL PERISH!



SUDDENLY THE THUNDEROUS VOICE OF GALACTUS CUTS SHORT THE GALADORIAN'S JUBILATION...

SPACEKNIGHTS, THE TIME HAS COME!

MY HUNGER GNAWS AT ME! IT MUST BE FED!



I STAND READY TO CARRY OUT MY PART OF OUR PACT, GALACTUS!

AND WE SPACE-KNIGHTS STAND READY SHOULD THE WORD OF THE WORD-DEVOURER PROVE TO BE WITHOUT HONOR!

HONOR! DISHONOR! THOSE ARE TERMS FOR LESSER BEINGS!

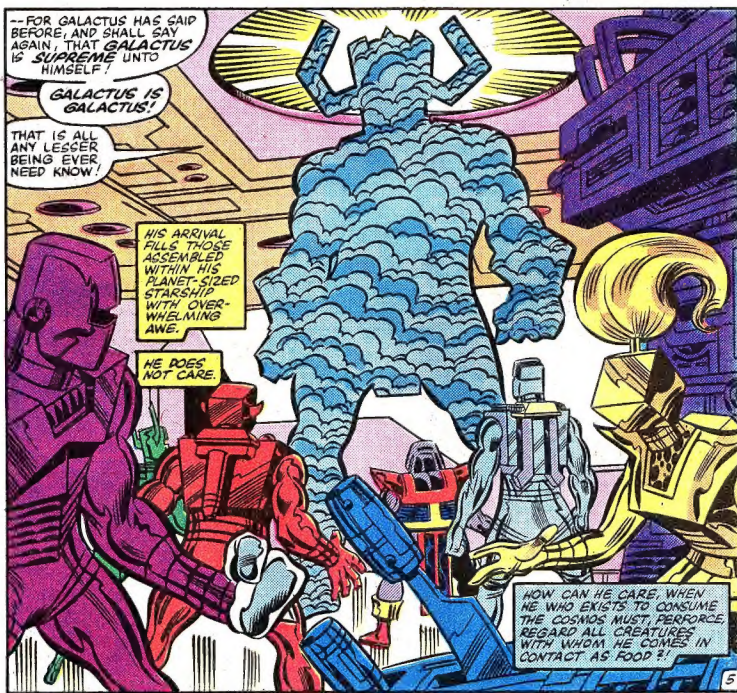


I AM **GALACTUS**, A MORALITY UNTO MYSELF! SEEKING TO SHACKLE ME TO STANDARDS OF HONOR--

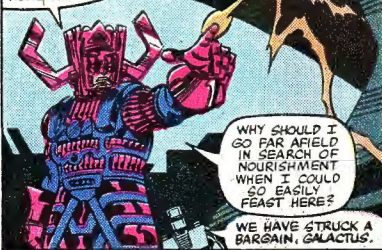
--IS LIKE TRYING TO YORE DREAMS TO REASON!

BUT, STILL, GALACTUS HAS GIVEN... HIS **WORD!**

A GESTURE--A THOUGHT--IS ALL IT TAKES...



IT IS MADNESS! ABOARD THIS SHIP THERE EXISTS MACHINERY CAPABLE OF REDUCING THE GOLDEN GALAXY TO PUREST ENERGY--ENERGY ENOUGH TO SATISFY GALACTUS'S HUNGER!



WHY SHOULD I GO FAR AFIELD IN SEARCH OF NOURISHMENT WHEN I COULD SO EASILY FEAST HERE?

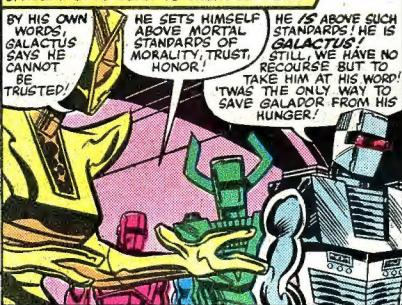
WE HAVE STRUCK A BARGAIN, GALACTUS.

AYE, ROM OF GALADOR-- A BARGAIN BETWEEN A LESSER BEING AND GALACTUS-- A BARGAIN WHICH I COULD BREAK AND NEVER THINK ON AGAIN!



BUT I *WILL* KEEP MY WORD. LEAD ME TO THIS STAR SYSTEM WHICH YOU SAY WILL SATISFY MY GNAWING HUNGER, AND YOUR GOLDEN GALAXY WILL BE SPARED.

AS THE HAUGHTY GALACTUS BENDS HIS WILL TO HIS CRAFT'S INCREDIBLE STARDRIVE ENGINES, THE SPACEKNIGHTS TURN TO THEIR LEADER...



BY HIS OWN WORDS, GALACTUS SAYS HE CANNOT BE TRUSTED!

HE SETS HIMSELF ABOVE MORTAL STANDARDS OF MORALITY, TRUST, HONOR!

HE IS ABOVE SUCH STANDARDS! HE IS **GALACTUS!**

STILL, WE HAVE NO RECOURSE BUT TO TAKE HIM AT HIS WORD! 'T'WAS THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE GALADOR FROM HIS HUNGER!

GALADOR! WHAT A PEACEFUL PLANET OURS ONCE WAS! THEN CAME THE **DIRE WRAITHS**-- OVER 200 YEARS AGO-- HEAVING HORRORS UPON OUR WORLD! WE SPACEKNIGHTS SACRIFICED THAT WHICH WE HELD MOST DEAR-- OUR HUMANITY-- TO DRIVE WRAITHKIND INTO SPACE...

... WHERE WE HAVE PURSUED THEM EVER SINCE, ERADICATING THEM, EVEN AS THEY SEEK TO BREED UPON OTHER WORLDS!

BUT, AS FAST AS WE EXTERMINATE THEM, THEY APPEAR ELSEWHERE, DRAWING NEW POWER FROM THE SORCEROUS **BLACK SUN** OF THEIR DREAD **DARK NEBULA!**



SHOULD GALACTUS CONSUME THEIR HOME SYSTEM, THE POWER OF WRAITHKIND WILL BE BROKEN FOREVER!

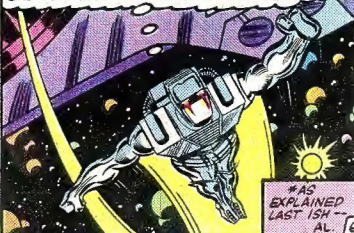


THE TIME HAS COME, ROM OF GALADOR, TO LEAD GALACTUS TO TABLE!

IGNITING HIS ROCKET-PODS, THE GREAT SILVER SPACEKNIGHT SOARS INTO THE VACUUM OF SPACE.

THERE, HIS INTERNAL RESPIRATOR FLOODING HIS HUMAN ORGANS WITH LIFE-GIVING OXYGEN, THE SHINING CYBORG STREAKS ON AHEAD OF THE GIANT STARSHIP OF GALACTUS!

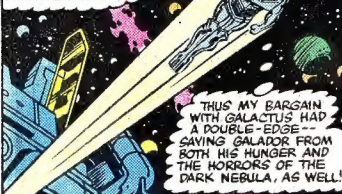
HAD GALACTUS NOT COME TO GALADOR, GALADOR MIGHT STILL HAVE BEEN DOOMED! HUGE, GALAXY-MOVING ENGINES HAD BEEN SET IN PLACE BY THE EVIL MENTUS TO DRIVE THE STAR SYSTEM CONTAINING GALADOR TOWARDS THE DARK NEBULA!*



*AS EXPLAINED LAST ISH -- AL 6

UPON DELIVERANCE OF THE GOLDEN GALAXY TO THE DARK NEBULA, MENTUS WOULD HAVE SET HIMSELF UP AS LORD OVER WRAITHKIND!

MENTUS WAS DEFEATED* BUT STILL THE GOLDEN GALAXY MOVES THROUGH SPACE TOWARDS A HORRIBLE FATE!

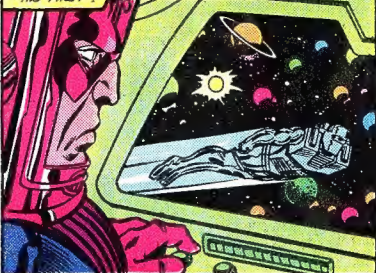


THUS MY BARGAIN WITH GALACTUS HAD A DOUBLE-EDGE-- SAVING GALADOR FROM BOTH HIS HUNGER AND THE HORRORS OF THE DARK NEBULA, AS WELL!

*MENTUS--AN IDIENERGY CREATION OF GALADOR'S PRIME DIRECTOR-- WAS SLAIN BY HIS CREATOR IN ROM #25--AL.

ABOARD THE GARGANTUAN STARSHIP, GALACTUS OBSERVES THE SPACEKNIGHT CALLED ROM.

DOES THE SIGHT OF THE SILVER CYBORGS LINED AGAINST THE SHINING STARS REMIND GALACTUS OF ANOTHER HERALD--HIS FIRST?



DOES GALACTUS EXPERIENCE REGRET THAT HIS ALL-CONSUMING HUNGER WILL ALWAYS SET SUCH SUPREMELY MORAL BEINGS AS ROM AND THE SILVER SURFER AGAINST HIM?



THE SILVER SURFER WAS MY FIRST AND GREATEST HERALD--YET ROM SEEMS HIS EQUAL IN EVERY WAY!

DOES THE MIGHTY GALACTUS EVER SUCCUMB TO--LONELINESS?

I HAVE LED GALACTUS TO FEAST ON MORE WORLDS THAN ALL HIS OTHER HERALDS COMBINED, YET NEVER HAS HE REGARDED ME WITH THE FAVOR HE RESERVES FOR THEM!



DOES THE SUPREMELY POWERFUL GALACTUS EVER WORRY AT THE RESENTMENT OF HIS SERVANT?

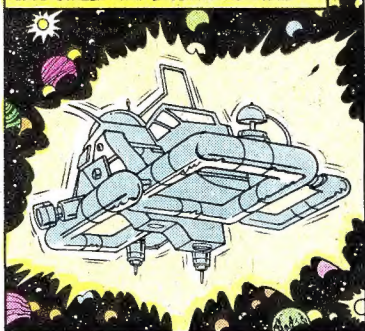
THESE ARE QUESTIONS FOR LESSER BEINGS TO PONDER. GALACTUS IS GALACTUS. HE IS WHAT HE IS. HE DOES WHAT HE DOES....



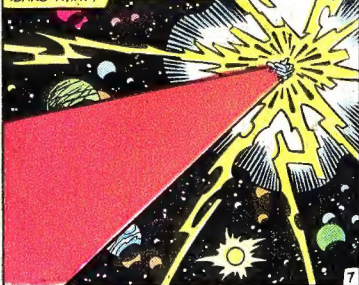
...IMPUTING NO MISPLACED MORALITY TO ACTIONS--

...THAT FILL ALL OTHERS WITH HELPLESS HORROR!

THE GREAT STARSHIP SHIMMERS, EXTENDING A FORCE-SCREEN THAT ENCOMPASSES ROM...

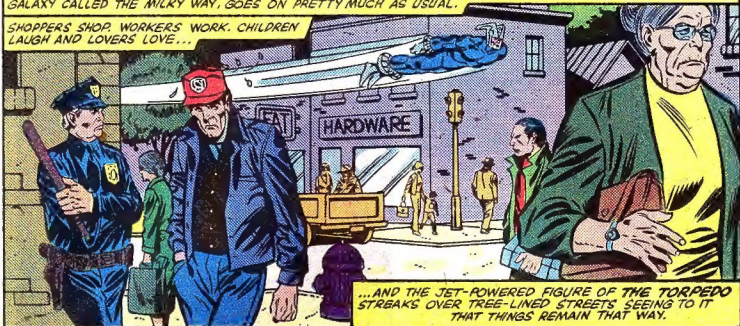


...AND, SO SHIELDED, BOTH PASS INTO HYPERSPACE, FORGING THROUGH THE VOID TOWARDS THE DREADED DARK NEBULA SO MANY LIGHT YEARS AWAY!

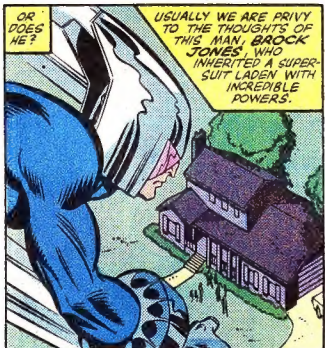


MEANWHILE, ON A WORLD NO LESS DISTANT (ALTHOUGH IN ANOTHER DIRECTION ALTOGETHER), LIFE IN THE TINY HAMLET OF CLAIRTON, WEST VIRGINIA, AMERICA, EARTH, THIRD PLANET ORBITING THE STAR-SUN SOL IN A GALAXY CALLED THE MILKY WAY, GOES ON PRETTY MUCH AS USUAL.

SHOPPERS SHOP, WORKERS WORK, CHILDREN LAUGH AND LOVERS LOVE...

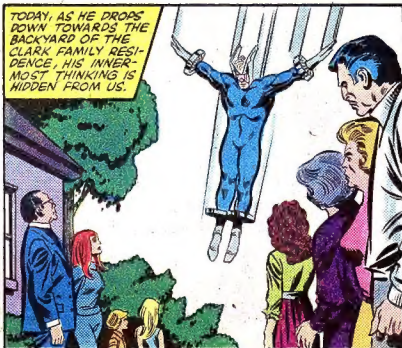


...AND THE JET-POWERED FIGURE OF THE TORPEDO STREAKS OVER TREE-LINED STREETS, SEEING TO IT THAT THINGS REMAIN THAT WAY.



USUALLY WE ARE PRIVY TO THE THOUGHTS OF THIS MAN, **BROCK JONES**, WHO INHERITED A SUPER-SUIT ADORNED WITH INCREDIBLE POWERS.

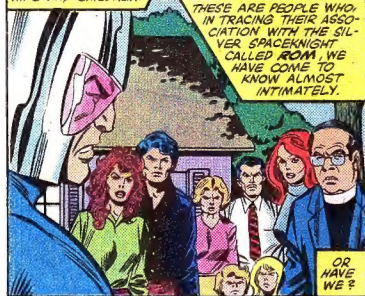
OR DOES HE?



TODAY, AS HE DROPS DOWN TOWARDS THE BACKYARD OF THE CLARK FAMILY RESIDENCE, HIS INNERMOST THINKING IS HIDDEN FROM US.

STRANGELY, SO TOO ARE HIDDEN THE THOUGHTS OF MR. AND MRS. JONATHAN CLARK, OF THEIR DAUGHTER BRANDY AND HER BOYFRIEND STEVE JACKSON, OF THE REVEREND SMITH, AND OF THE TORPEDO'S OWN WIFE AND CHILDREN.

THESE ARE PEOPLE WHO, IN TRACING THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH THE SILVER SPACEKNIGHT CALLED **ROM**, WE HAVE COME TO KNOW ALMOST INTIMATELY.



OR HAVE WE?

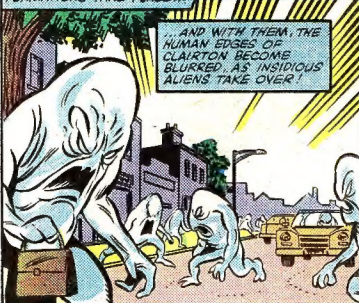
SURELY, THEN, WE SHOULD HAVE SENSED THAT, DESPITE THEIR FAMILIAR APPEARANCE, THOSE PEOPLE ASSEMBLED BEFORE US ARE **NOT** WHO THEY PURPORT TO BE.

THERE ARE NO OUTSIDERS IN CLAIRTON! IT IS SAFE TO SHED OUR HUMAN DISGUISES!



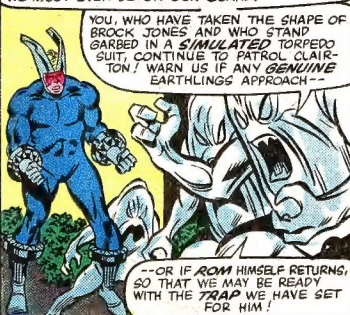
INDEED, THEY ARE NOT PEOPLE AT ALL... BUT **DIRE WRAITHS!**

ALL OVER CLAIRTON--WITH THE SENSE OF SECURITY BEING TRANSMITTED SORCEROUSLY FROM ONE WRAITH TO ANOTHER--SIMILAR, HORRIFIC TRANSFORMATIONS TAKE PLACE...



...AND WITH THEM, THE HUMAN EDGES OF CLAIRTON BECOME BLURRED, AS INSIDIOUS ALIENS TAKE OVER!

AH, HOW GOOD IT FEELS TO SHED OUR REPULSIVE HUMAN FORMS, IF ONLY FOR AN HOUR! BUT STILL, WE MUST EVER BE ON OUR GUARD!



YOU, WHO HAVE TAKEN THE SHAPE OF BROCK JONES AND WHO STAND GARBED IN A *SIMULATED* TORPEDO SUIT, CONTINUE TO PATROL CLAIRTON! WARN US IF ANY *GENUINE* EARTHLINGS APPROACH--

--OR IF ROM HIMSELF RETURNS, SO THAT WE MAY BE READY WITH THE *TRAP* WE HAVE SET FOR HIM!

MEANWHILE, IN A SPECIALLY-PREPARED *WHITE-CELL* SUNK BY THE WRAITHS INTO THE OLD MINES RUNNING BENEATH CLAIRTON...



...THE *REAL* CLAIRTONS 'FIGHT HARD TO KEEP FROM SUCCEEDING TO DESPAIR!



BOY, THOSE SHAPE-SHIFTING SPACE SCUM CAUGHT US GOOD!

THEIR *FOG* WIFTED OVER THE TOWN--STEALING OUR WILLS--AND THEN THEY STUCK US ALL DOWN HERE WHILE TAKING OUR PLACES TO PREPARE AN AMBUSH FOR ROM!

ROM LEFT YOU TO WATCH OVER CLAIRTON, TORPEDO! YOU SURE FELL ASLEEP AT THE SWITCH!

STEVE, YOU'RE NOT BEING FAIR! THE TORPEDO CAN'T SEE THROUGH THE WRAITH'S HUMAN DISGUISES! NONE OF US CAN!

STILL, BRANDY, I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED SOMETHING WAS WRONG--



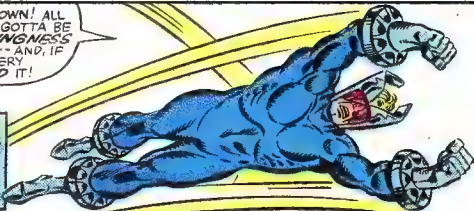
--WHEN MY WIFE TOLD ME THAT OUR KIDS *WEREN'T* OUR KIDS, AND WHEN OTHER CLAIRTONERS STARTED ACTING LIKE THEY WERE *POSSESSED*! ANY *REAL* SUPER HERO WOULD HAVE TUMBLED ONTO THE TRUTH!

BROCK, YOU CAN'T BLAME YOURSELF! WH-WHERE ARE YOU GOING?



WHERE, LORRY HONEY? UP! DOWN! ALL AROUND THE TOWN! THERE'S GOTTA BE SOME LIMIT TO THIS **NOTHINGNESS** WE'VE BEEN IMPRISONED IN-- AND, IF I THRUST FAR ENOUGH IN EVERY DIRECTION, MAYBE I'LL FIND IT!

THE THUNDER OF JET BACKWASH ACCOMPANIES THE TORPEDO'S ATTEMPTS TO HURL HIMSELF AGAINST THE UNSEEN EXTREMITIES OF THE BORDERLESS PRISON.



NO MATTER HOW **HIGH**-- HOW **FA**R-- HOW **FAST** I GO, I STILL COME UP AGAINST... **NOTHING!**

BUT THE WALLS **ARE** REAL, TORP! I BUSTED OUT OF A CELL LIKE THIS ONCE!

ONLY BECAUSE SOMEONE ELSE ENGAGED YOUR WRAITH GUARDS BEFORE THEY COULD SEAL THE CELL BEHIND THEM, STEVE!

BUT WE HAVEN'T **SEEN** ANY WRAITHS SINCE THEY STUCK US IN HERE! FOOD MATERIALIZES AS IF OUT OF NOWHERE! WHEN IT STOPS, WE'LL KNOW WE'VE OUTLIVED OUR USEFULNESS, AND THE WRAITHS HAVE DECIDED TO LET US DIE!

PLEASE, BROCK-- YOU'RE FRIGHTENING THE CHILDREN!

WE'RE NOT SCARED, MOMMY!

DADDY'LL GET US OUT OF HERE! WE KNOW HE WILL!

NO ONE ANSWERS THE CHILDREN... OR NOTICES THE FAINTEST RIPLE IN THE FLOOR OF THE WHITE CELL.

IT'S THE PERFECT PRISON! FOR ALL MY JET POWER, I CAN'T STRIKE OUT AGAINST SOMETHING THAT **ISN'T THERE!**

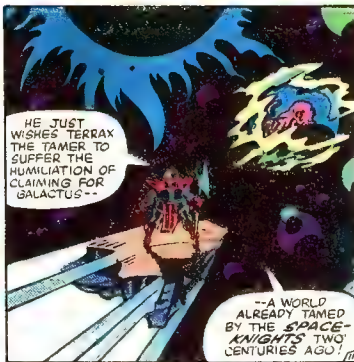
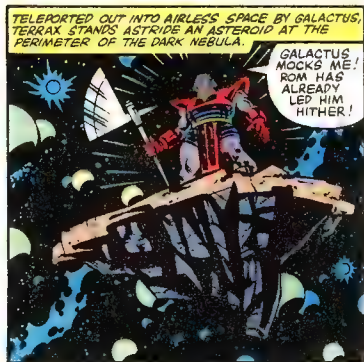
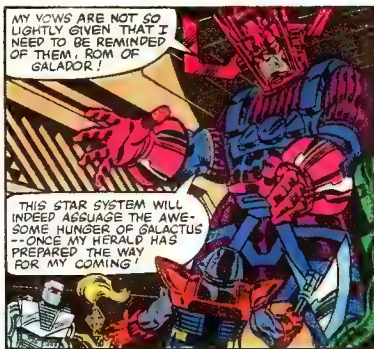
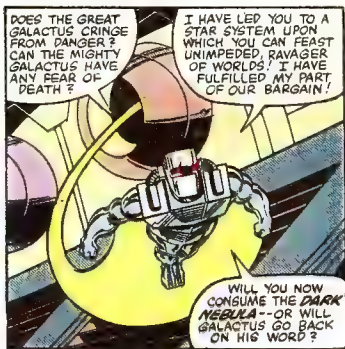
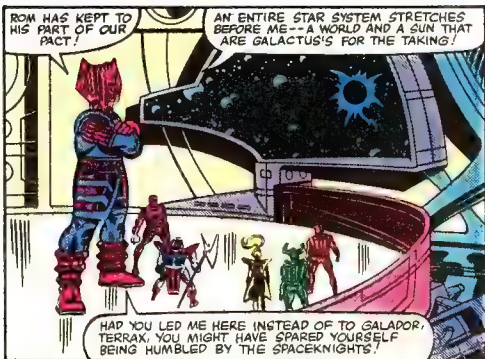
FROM #15-- AL.

LIGHT YEARS DISTANT, A STARSHIP EMERGES FROM HYPERDRIVE TO FIND ITSELF ON THE OUTERMOST FRONTIER OF A STAR SYSTEM DOMINATED BY A HUGE, OBSCENE, EBON-BLACK SUN.

THE COLD HERE IS DEEPER THAN THE COLDEST COLD OF ANY OTHER PART OF SPACE. THE BLACK SUN SHEDS NO WARMTH UPON ITS SINGLE ORBITING WORLD.

THERE IS A SENSE OF EVIL IN THE DARKNESS THAT EMANATES FROM THE STELLAR BODY--A SENSE OF SORCERY MOST VILE, OF DARK MAGICS MOST FOUL.

THIS IS THE **DARK NEBULA**. 'T WAS HERE THAT THE **DIRE WRAITHS**--SHAPE-SHIFTING SCOURGES OF SPACE--WERE BIRTHED!



MEANWHILE, ON THE BRIDGE OF GALACTUS'S STARSHIP...

I HAD FORGOTTEN HOW HORRIBLE-- HOW INSIDIOUSLY EVIL-- HOW ANTI-HUMAN THE DARK NEBULA IS, ROM!

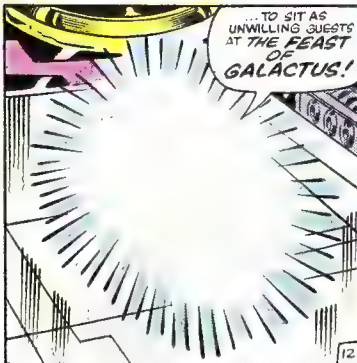
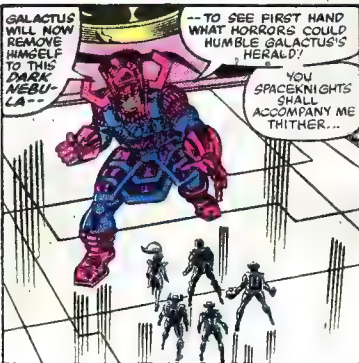
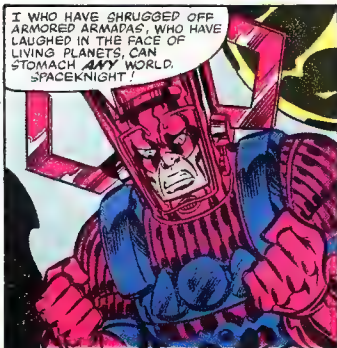
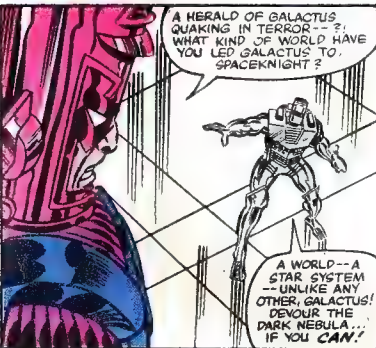
I HAVE NOT. 'T WAS HERE THAT WE FOUGHT A PITCHED BATTLE AGAINST WRAITHKIND AND WRAITH SORCERY, AND SUCCEEDED IN DRIVING THE SHAPE-SHIFTERS INTO SPACE.

YET WE DID NOT TARRY TO SAVOR OUR VICTORY, FEARING HIDDEN HORRORS WITHIN THE DARK NEBULA!

AS IF TO UNDERSCORE ROM'S DIRE PRONOUNCEMENT, A TERRIFIED TERRAX REAPPEARS COWERING BEFORE HIS MASTER.

DEATH! DEATH AND DARKNESS! ENTER NOT THE DARK NEBULA, GALACTUS--

--LEST EVEN YOU SHOULD FAIL TO RETURN!



WRAITHWORLD!

IF EVER IT POSSESSED ANY OTHER NAME, NO LIVING SOUL OUTSIDE THE DARK NEBULA, EVER KNEW IT!

WRAITHWORLD!

ONCE IT HAD CITIES---JET-BLACK TOWERS CLAWING AT A STARLESS SKY! VENGEFUL SPACEKNIGHTS TOPPLED THEM, DRIVING THE SHAPE-SHIFTING POPULACE TO WAITING SHIPS!

WRAITHWORLD!

BELOW ITS SURFACE MIGHTY ENGINES OF WAR WERE BUILT! ACROSS ITS SURFACE SLAVES OF MYRIAD WORLDS LABORED AND DIED! ABOVE ITS SURFACE OBSCENE EROSY CREATURES STRETCHED THEIR LEATHERN WINGS AND SHRIEKED DOWN THE HEAVENS!

WRAITHWORLD!

OF ALL THE WORLDS GALACTUS HAS CONSUMED NEVER HAS HE BEEN ANY TO COMPARE WITH THIS!

RIVERS OF MOLTEN METAL SCAR THE SURFACE, FED BY ACID RAINS, ASH AS BLACK AS NIGHT SWEEPS LIKE A FETTER- LENCE THROUGH THE DARKLING SKY.

STILL, A WORLD IS A WORLD, AND THE HUNGER OF GALACTUS MUST BE FED!

A GESTURE...

...AND AN INSTRUMENT OF UNFATHOMABLE SCIENCE ASSEMBLES ITSELF ON THE SURFACE OF WRAITHWORLD!

MY ENERGY CONVERTOR IS AIMED NOT AT WRAITHWORLD-- BUT AT YONDER BLACK SUN. THERE EXISTS NO LIFE IN THIS DARK NEBULA SO GALACTUS WILL CONSUME ALL!



WILL YOU, RAVAGER OF WORLDS? WE GALACTORIANS ONCE TRIED TO DESTROY WRAITHWORLD!

I WAGER YOU WILL FAIL AS WE FAILED

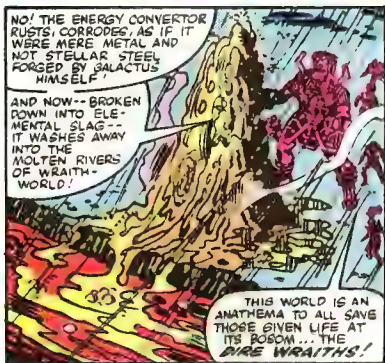


FAIL TO CONSUME A WORLD ONCE MY ENERGY CONVERTOR IS IN PLACE?

NEVER!



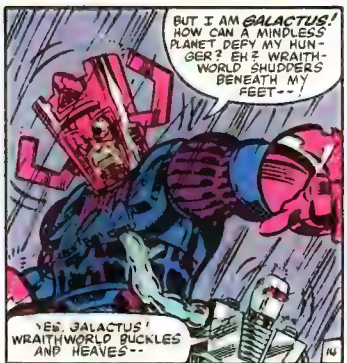
YET, EVEN NOW THE ACID RAINS OF WRAITHWORLD WASH OVER YOUR INSTRUMENT, GALACTUS, PITTING ITS SURFACE, EATING INTO ITS INNARDS!



NO! THE ENERGY CONVERTOR RUSTS, CORRODES, AS IF IT WERE MERE METAL AND NOT STELLAR STEEL FORGED BY GALACTUS HIMSELF!

AND NOW--BROKEN DOWN INTO ELEMENTAL SLAG-- IT WASHES AWAY INTO THE MOLTEN RIVERS OF WRAITHWORLD!

THIS WORLD IS AN ANATHEMA TO ALL SAVE THOSE GIVEN LIFE AT ITS BOSOM... THE DIRE WRAITHS!

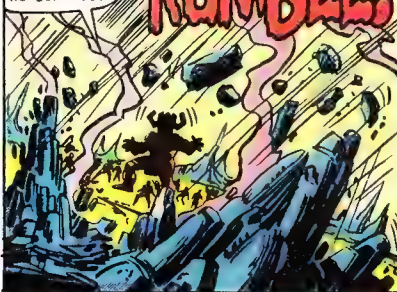


BUT I AM GALACTUS! HOW CAN A MINDLESS PLANET DEFY MY HUNGER? EH? WRAITHWORLD SHUDDERS BENEATH MY FEET--

YEE, GALACTUS! WRAITHWORLD BUCKLES AND HEAVES--

-- IN A VIOLENT
PLANETQUAKE
DESIGNED TO
EXPUL US FROM
ITS SURFACE!

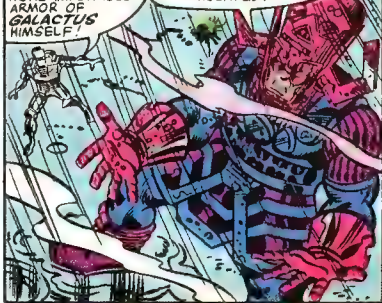
RUMBLE!



ROM, THE ACID RAINS
INTENSIFY THEIR CORRO-
SIVE POWER-- EATING
AWAY AT EVEN MY
GALADOR-FORGED
PLANDANIUM
ARMOR!

AYE, HAMMERHEAD--
AND AT THE EVEN
MORE IMPERIOUS
ARMOR OF
GALACTUS
HIMSELF!

NEVER HAS THE PERSON
OF GALACTUS BEEN SO
VIOLATED!



YOU KNEW THIS WOULD
HAPPEN, ROM OF GALA-
DOR! DESPITE THE FACT
THAT WRAITHWORLD
BIRTHED YOUR ENEMIES,
YOU WERE TOO MORAL
TO DESTROY THEIR
PLANET YOURSELVES!

YOU CONTENTED
YOURSELVES WITH
DRIVING THE
WRAITHS OFF
WRAITHWORLD,
LEAVING IT BARREN
AND LIFELESS!



YET, TO SAVE
GALADOR, YOU
WOULD LET ME
ATTEMPT TO
DEVOUR WRAITH-
WORLD IN THE
HOPE THAT BOTH
I AND THE DARK
NEBULA WOULD
BE DESTROYED!

BUT THERE IS NO WORLD WHICH
GALACTUS CANNOT CONSUME!
THERE IS NO PLANET POWERFUL
ENOUGH TO DEFY HIS HUNGER!



ZRAK!

LET ANTIMATTER BEAMS
THRUST FORTH FROM MY
ARMOR TO REDUCE THIS
WORLD TO PUREST ENERGY!

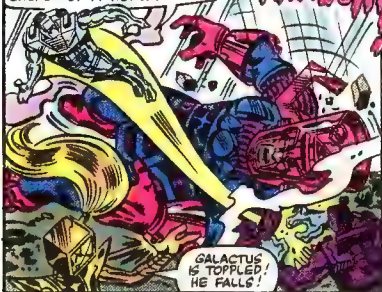
AARGHH!



GALACTUS'S SCREAM
SHATTERS THE SKY
LIKE THUNDER! WHAT
IS IT? WHAT HAS
HAPPENED?

PERHAPS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN EXISTENCE A WORLD HAS FED ON GALACTUS'S ENERGY AS GALACTUS IS WONT TO FEED ON THE ENERGY OF A WORLD!

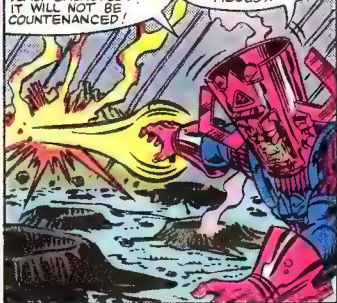
THROOM!



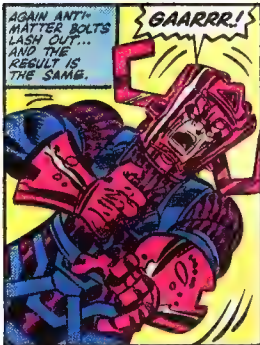
GALACTUS IS TOPPLED! HE FALLS!

NEVER IN MY EON-SPANNING EXISTENCE HAS SUCH AN AFFRONT BEEN DEALT GALACTUS! IT WILL NOT BE COUNTEANANCED!

I WILL **SHATTER** THIS WORLD--AND FEED ON THE PIECES!!

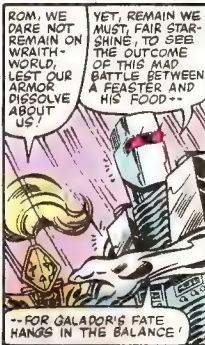


AGAIN ANTI-MATTER BOLTS LASH OUT... AND THE RESULT IS THE SAME.



GAARRR!

ROM, WE DARE NOT REMAIN ON WRAITH-WORLD, LEST OUR ARMOR DISSOLVE ABOUT US!



--FOR GALADOR'S FATE HANGS IN THE BALANCE!

YOU HAVE TRICKED ME SPACEKNIGHT! THIS WORLD WILL NOT BE CONSUMED!



TRICKED YOU, GALACTUS? NO, I HAVE MERELY LED YOU TO A WORLD AS RAVENOUS AS YOURSELF!

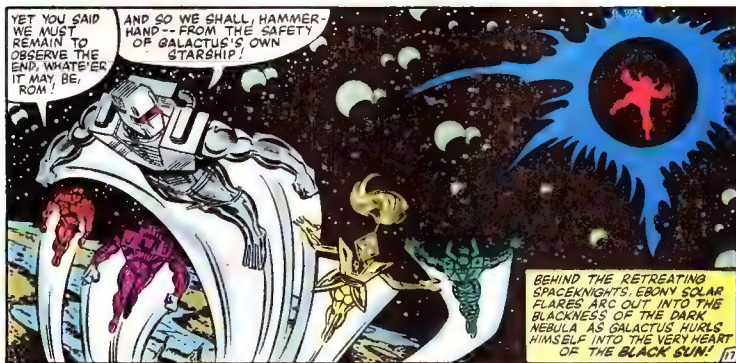
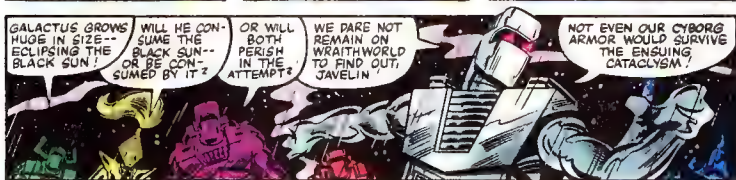
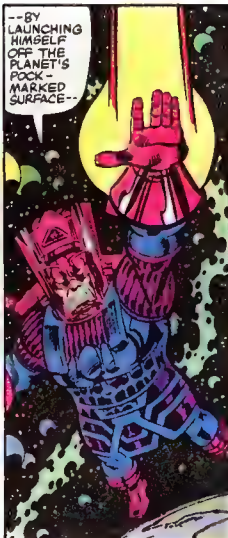
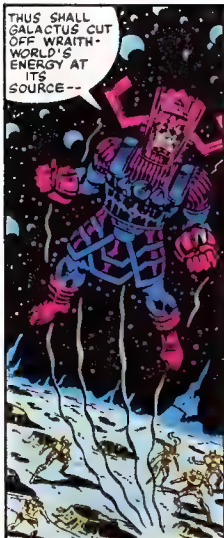


I PROMISED TO BRING YOU TO A LIFELESS WORLD UPON WHICH YOU COULD FEAST!

I NEVER GUARANTEED THAT WRAITHWORLD WOULD NOT TRY TO FEED UPON YOU!

IT IS THE **BLACK SUN** IN THE DARK HEAVENS ABOVE THAT SUPPLIES THIS WORLD WITH ENERGY TO RESIST CONSUMPTION BY GALACTUS!



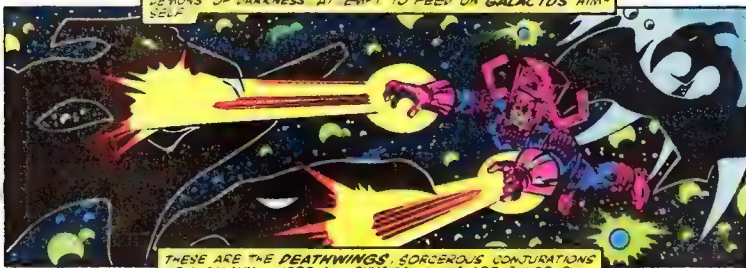




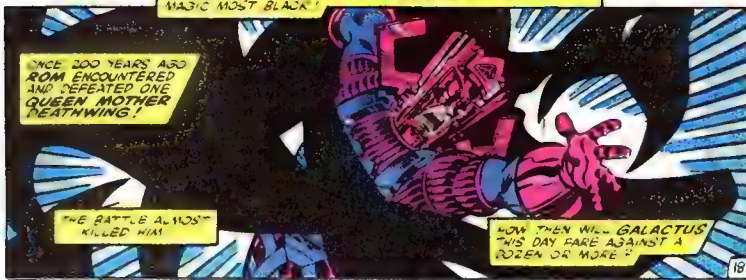
EXPENDING ENORMOUS AMOUNTS OF ENERGY TO GROW TO THE SIZE OF THE BLACK SUN ITSELF. GALACTUS ATTEMPTS TO FEED UPON THE EBONY ORB



BUT AS IF SENSING GALACTUS'S OWN ENERGIES, THE BLACK SUN EXTENDS TENDRILS OF POWER WHICH, TAKING LIVING SHAPE AS DEMONS OF DARKNESS, ATTEMPT TO FEED ON GALACTUS HIMSELF



THESE ARE THE DEATHWINGS, SORCEROUS CONJURATIONS OF A GALAXY WHERE ALL PHYSICAL LAWS ARE RULED BY MAGIC MOST BLACK



200 YEARS AGO ROM ENCOUNTERED AND DEFEATED ONE QUEEN MOTHER DEATHWING!

THE BATTLE ALMOST KILLED HIM

HOW THEN WILL GALACTUS THIS DAY FARE AGAINST A DOZEN OR MORE?

FLEEING THE HOLO-
CAUST, THE SPACE-
KNIGHTS ATTAIN
THE RELATIVE
SAFETY OF
GALACTUS'S SHIP.

MY MASTER IS NOT WITH YOU! HAS THE
UNTHINKABLE COME TO PASS? HAS THE
INCOMPARABLE GALACTUS SUCCEUMBED TO
THE HORRORS OF THE DARK NEBULA?!

NONE KNOWS AS
YET, TERRAX--

--WHETHER
GALACTUS HAS
CONSUMED... OR
HAS BEEN
CONSUMED
HIMSELF!

THE ANSWER TO YOUR
QUESTION, GALADORIAN--

--STANDS
BEFORE
YOU!

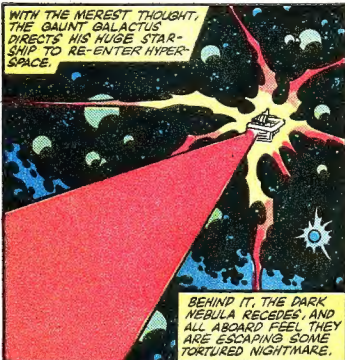
GALACTUS!

MASTER!

YOU LIVE!
THEN, THE
DARK
NEBULA--!

THE DARK
NEBULA EXISTS
AS IT WILL ALWAYS
EXIST--AN ARCAN
PRESENCE IN THE
COSMOS--AN OBSCENE
PESTHOLE GIVING
RISE TO PLAGUE!
AND PESTILENCE!

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS EXISTENCE IT CAN
BE SAID OF GALACTUS THAT HE HAS MET A
WORLD--AN ENTIRE SECTOR OF SPACE--WHICH
HE HAD NOT THE *STOMACH* TO CONSUME!



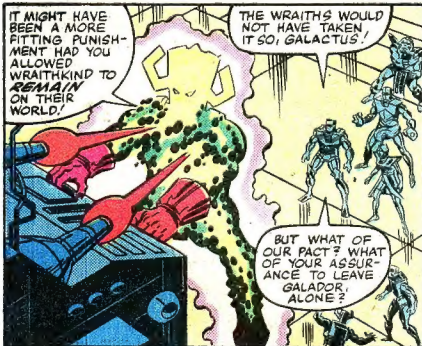
WITH THE MEREST THOUGHT, THE GAUNT GALACTUS DIRECTS HIS HUGE STARSHIP TO RE-ENTER HYPER-SPACE.

BEHIND IT, THE DARK NEBULA RECEDES, AND ALL ABOARD FEEL THEY ARE ESCAPING SOME TORTURED NIGHTMARE.



YOU KNEW, ROM OF GALADOR, THAT THE DARK NEBULA WOULD ATTEMPT TO FEED ON ME EVEN AS I TRIED TO FEED UPON IT?

YES, GALACTUS-- I KNEW. MANY A GALADORIAN WAS CONSUMED BY THE CREATURES FROM THE BLACK SUN BEFORE WE ABANDONED OUR ATTEMPTED DESTRUCTION OF WRAITHWORLD.



IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A MORE FITTING PUNISHMENT HAD YOU ALLOWED WRAITHKIND TO REMAIN ON THEIR WORLD!

THE WRAITHS WOULD NOT HAVE TAKEN IT SO, GALACTUS!

BUT WHAT OF OUR PACT? WHAT OF YOUR ASSURANCE TO LEAVE GALADOR ALONE?



OUR PACT, SPACEKNIGHT? DID YOU BARGAIN IN GOOD FAITH--

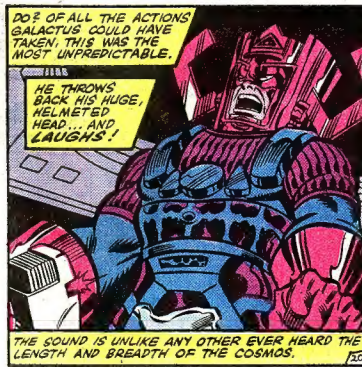
--OR DID YOU TRY TO LEAD THE DEVOURER TO THE SLAUGHTER?



I BARGAINED WITH MY WORLD UPON THE BLOCK, GALACTUS! AYE, I HOPED YOU MIGHT MEET YOUR END-- THAT THE DEVOURER MIGHT BE DEVoured-- BUT I ALSO HOPED YOU MIGHT PREVAIL OVER THE DARK NEBULA--

--FOR WHEN HAS GALACTUS EVER BEEN KNOWN TO FAIL?

ROM, GALACTUS STARES AT YOU WITH FURY IN HIS EYES! WHAT WILL HE DO?



DO? OF ALL THE ACTIONS GALACTUS COULD HAVE TAKEN, THIS WAS THE MOST UNPREDICTABLE.

HE THROWS BACK HIS HUGE, HELMETED HEAD... AND LAUGHS!

THE SOUND IS UNLIKE ANY OTHER EVER HEARD THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF THE COSMOS.

VERY WELL, SPACEKNIGHT--TURN-ABOUT IS FAIR PLAY! YOU DID LEAD ME TO THE DARK NEBULA, AS YOU PROMISED! 'T WAS NO FAULT OF YOURS THAT I FAILED TO FEAST!

THEN YOU'LL KEEP TO YOUR BARGAIN? GALADOR WILL REMAIN SAFE?

SAFE, WOMAN? AYE, AND MORE! YOU SAID THAT YOUR GOLDEN GALAXY HAD BEEN MOVED FROM ITS RIGHTFUL POSITION IN SPACE...

... THAT AN EVIL GENIUS HAD SENT IT HURTLING TOWARDS CERTAIN DESTRUCTION IN THE DARK NEBULA!

GALACTUS WILL NOW SHOW HIS MAGNANIMITY OF SPIRIT BY PRESERVING YOUR WORLD FROM HARM!

ROM, WHAT IS HAPPENING--?!

GALACTUS IS DISPLAYING HIS AWESOME POWER! WE FADE AWAY!

TO REAPPEAR ON THIS ASTEROID!

WHY? WHERE HAS GALACTUS SENT US?

SCAN YOUR VECTOR-CIRCUITS. DO THEY NOT TELL YOU WHERE WE ARE?

YES, THIS IS THE SECTOR OF SPACE OCCUPIED BY THE GOLDEN GALAXY--

--BUT GALADOR IS NOWHERE TO BE SEEN!

THEN GALACTUS WENT BACK ON HIS WORD! GALADOR HAS GONE TO FEED HIS HUNGER!

NO, GALACTUS HAS KEPT TO HIS WORD, STARSHINE. INDEED, FAR FROM DEVOURING GALADOR, HE HAS RELOCATED IT IN SPACE.

GALACTUS HAS SAVED OUR WORLD.

AS HE SAID, TURNABOUT IS FAIR PLAY. THE GOLDEN GALAXY IS NO LONGER PLUNGING TOWARDS CERTAIN DESTRUCTION IN THE DARK NEBULA-- BUT NEITHER IS IT ANYWHERE WHERE WE SPACEKNIGHTS CAN HOPE TO FIND IT...

... UNLESS WE DEVOTE CENTURIES TO THE SEARCH! TO DO SO WE WOULD BE FORCED TO ABANDON OUR QUEST--

--THUS DOOMING HUNDREDS OF HELPLESS WORLDS TO THE DIRE WRAITHS!

AND THAT WE CAN NEVER DO!

DRIFTING AMONG THE STARS, THE SPACEKNIGHTS HANG THEIR HEADS.

NEXT MONTH: WILL ROM DIE IN THE EMBRACE OF HIS FRIENDS?

EARTHWARD BOUND!



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